

6. Initial Assessment

6.1 Assessing The Child's And Family's Service Needs

The assessment process is the basis for sound case management and successful service planning. It is through the use of the assessment process that the service worker gathers accurate, relevant information concerning the child and family's situation. This information is used to determine the client's strengths and needs, the services required, the resources needed, the time available, and the criteria for evaluating future needs of the child and family.

Assessment is an ongoing process that begins with the first contact with the child and family, and that does not end until the case is closed. Case management requires continuous reassessment of the child and family's situation and the agency's service delivery. Reassessment is accomplished through monitoring of the service plan and evaluation of the effectiveness of the services and resources that are made available to the child and family.

6.2 Initial Assessment Requirements

6.2.1 THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD AND THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE BIRTH FAMILY OR PRIOR CUSTODIAN SHALL BE ASSESSED TO DETERMINE THE SERVICE NEEDS OF THE CHILD AND FAMILY.

6.2.2 THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT SHALL:

- BE ENTERED INTO OASIS AND COMPLETED WITHIN 60 DAYS OF ACCEPTANCE OF THE CHILD FOR PLACEMENT. REASSESSMENTS WILL OCCUR AT LEAST EVERY SIX MONTHS AFTER PLACEMENT FOR AS LONG AS THE CHILD REMAINS IN FOSTER CARE. See Section 10 for information on reassessments.
- Be entered into OASIS, using the OASIS assessment screen and completing all the required elements of the appropriate OASIS screens. The OASIS Assessment screens may be printed, signed and placed in the paper case record.
- INCLUDE, as part of the OASIS record and entered in the appropriate element in the OASIS Assessment Screen , A SUMMARY OF THE COMPLETED CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES RISK ASSESSMENT IF THE CHILD ENTERED FOSTER CARE AS A RESULT OF A FOUNDED ABUSE OR NEGLECT COMPLAINT.

The assessment includes, but is not limited to the following minimum requirements:

- IDENTIFYING INFORMATION ABOUT THE CHILD such as name, date of birth, race, social security numbers etc. In OASIS, these are found in sections other than on the Assessment Screen.
- CIRCUMSTANCES THAT LED TO THE TRANSFER OF THE CHILD'S CUSTODY OR PLACEMENT WITH THE AGENCY AND, WHERE APPLICABLE, INCORPORATE REASONS/CIRCUMSTANCES INDICATED IN THE CHILD PROTECTIVE SERVICES RISK ASSESSMENT. Refer to Section 6.3
- BACKGROUND HISTORY ABOUT THE CHILD to include pertinent information on the birth, medical and developmental history; the past and present physiological, psychological and educational functioning; and the past and present social functioning, especially in relation to his/her daily routine and attitudes toward his siblings, parents, foster parents, peers, care providers, and others
- BACKGROUND HISTORY ABOUT THE FAMILY OR PRIOR CUSTODIAN to include the names, date of birth and death, if applicable, employment status and history, education, and medical history, including the birth and developmental history
- AGENCY OR OTHER COMMUNITY AGENCY INVOLVEMENT WITH THE CHILD AND FAMILY to include significant emotional ties with adults or other children and services offered to prevent removal.
- SUMMARY OF THE NEEDS OF THE CHILD AND FAMILY that would reduce the risk of harm so that the child can return home. This should include services needed to reunite the child with his/her family, the type of placement needed, services needed to maintain a placement, and services needed to achieve the selected permanency goal
- CONDITIONS OR CIRCUMSTANCES PARENTS OR PRIOR CUSTODIANS MUST ADDRESS FOR THE CHILD TO RETURN HOME that would improve the conditions and reduce the risk of harm that led to the need for foster care, such as improving or alleviating substance abuse usage, improving parenting skills, improving home management skills, etc.

6.2.3 THE INITIAL ASSESSMENT WILL RESULT IN THE SELECTION OF A SPECIFIC FOSTER CARE permanency GOAL. Completion of the Permanency Planning Indicator during the initial assessment may also support the selection of a concurrent goal.

6.2.4 WHEN A CHILD IS REFERRED TO THE FAMILY ASSESSMENT AND PLANNING TEAM (FAPT), THE FAPT ASSESSMENT MAY SUBSTITUTE FOR ALL OF THE INITIAL FOSTER CARE ASSESSMENT AS LONG AS THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE INITIAL FOSTER CARE ASSESSMENT ARE MET.

IN ADDITION, CHILDREN RECEIVING CSA FUNDED MAINTENANCE AND SERVICES MUST UNDERGO A UNIFORM ASSESSMENT TO ASSESS BEHAVIOR AND FUNCTIONING. FOR CHILDREN, AGES 7 AND ABOVE, THE CHILD AND ADOLESCENT FUNCTIONAL ASSESSMENT SCALE (CAFAS) WILL BE USED. FOR CHILDREN, AGES 4-7, THE PRESCHOOL AND EARLY CHILDHOOD ASSESSMENT (PECFAS) WILL BE USED TO ASSESS THE CHILD. THE REQUIREMENT FOR A UNIFORM ASSESSMENT DOES NOT APPLY TO TITLE IV-E CHILDREN WHO DO NOT RECEIVE SERVICES FROM CSA.

6.3 Child Protective Services Risk Assessment

The child protective service worker initially completed this assessment during the child protective service investigation. In those cases where children have come into care due to abuse and neglect, on-going risk assessment needs to occur periodically throughout the life of the case. The purpose is to determine the likelihood of the child being harmed by a caretaker and the services to be provided to reduce risk of harm.

The child protective services risk assessment includes information related to the following factors: (for details see Vol. VII, Section III, Chapter A, Child Protective Services)

- The incident of abuse and degree of harm to child;
- The child and his/her physical and mental vulnerability;
- The caretaker and his/her ability or willingness to stop the abuse;
- The family and its ability or willingness to provide protection for the child; and
- Any other factors that contribute to greater or lesser risk to the child.

The foster care worker must consult with the child protective service worker regarding information included in this assessment. The foster care worker must incorporate a summary of the risk assessment into the initial foster care assessment.